



2016 MOTORCOACH TASK FORCE MEETING #4

City of Alexandria | Department of Transportation & Environmental Services
Thursday, September 15, 2016 | 6:00-9:00 pm
Chet and Sabra Avery Conference Room – City Hall | 301 King Street

NOTES

Committee members in attendance:

- Steve Klejst, Chair
- David Kasprzyk
- Susan Howells
- Charlotte Hall
- Victor Parra
- Bert Ely
- Lauren Kramer
- Randy Cole

Project staff:

- Steve Sindiong, City of Alexandria
- Patrick Reed, City of Alexandria
- Anthony Gammon, City of Alexandria

Public:

- Four (4) members of the public signed the sign-in sheet.

Introductions (Stephen Klejst)

-Chair Klejst opened the meeting and discussed the project's objectives and deliverables.

-The Chair discussed the purpose of the evening's meetings, which were to review policy options and discuss location evaluation results.

Discussion of Policy Options (Steve Klejst, Patrick Reed, Steve Sindiong)

-Chair Klejst provided a brief overview of each of the policy options prior to discussing each policy individually with the Task Force.

-The following discussion points from each potential policy follow below:

Ambassador Program:

-Task Force Representative Kramer asked about contacting other cities who have similar programs related Reed responded that the City had reached-out to other cities with similar programs, noting Savannah as one City of relevance. Reed noted that their staff considered issues regarding a citizen program involving liability and management.

-Task Force Representative Howells asked about other sources of funding for the Ambassador Program. Reed responded that potentially, there may be some grants available. Acting T&ES Transportation Planning Division Chief Sindiong noted that the Chamber of Commerce may have resources. Sindiong also noted the staff resources involved with managing the program.

-Task Force Representative Cole asked about the existing program. Reed provided details on the previous season's pilot program.

-The Task Force discussed the attire of the Task Force and visibility for ambassadors.

-Task Force Representative Kasprzyk asked about the paid parking functioning as a source of revenue that could help fund the ambassador program. Reed responded that revenue from parking at the Masonic Memorial is a 20/80 split. Roughly 20% of the revenue generated by the Memorial parking funnels into the City's general fund.

-Task Force Representative Kasprzyk asked whether or not the pilot program was a success. Reed responded that there were some successes and challenges. The successes were individual interactions; the drawbacks were the Ambassador's inability to manage the entire area at one time.

-Task Force Representative Cole asked about tracking data. Reed responded that midway through the program, the Ambassadors began tracking data, but not a large degree of specificity. In the future, ambassadors could track more specific data about problem locations and idling times.

-A Task Force Member asked about short term parking costs. Reed detailed the costs at Masonic Memorial and noted that the other short-term parking locations are free.

-Task Force Member Bert Ely asked about short term parking at Robinson Terminal North. Reed noted that after learning that the developer is re-examining the future development, T&ES staff reopened the spaces until the developer is ready to begin construction. Staff emailed the Motorcoach List Serve to inform operators the spaces had been reopened. Staff emailed specific operators who frequently use spaces directly.

-Task Force Representative Parra asked if the ambassador in the pilot program had information to distribute. Reed responded that the ambassador provided brochures with information about parking and loading locations, as well as information about restrooms and restaurants.

-Task Force Representative Howells asked about providing flyers to interested individuals to share.

-Task Force Representative Kasprzyk asked about the potential to share information with contract managers for restaurants and tour companies. The Task Force agreed that this would be helpful.

-Task Force Representative Ely asked about the potential to look at information on a smart phone. The Task Force discussed whether or not the website is mobile ready. Staff responded that they would need to check with the IT staff to determine whether or not the website was mobile ready. T&ES staff indicated that it would work to improve the effectiveness of a website and mobile-readiness.

-Task Force Representative Cole asked about putting locations on a Google Map. Reed noted that it could work with third-party map providers to add these locations to Google, but that this would require work with a third-party and thus staff could not guarantee its ability to do this. The Task Force asked about whether or not Visit Alexandria has the information. Reed noted they do, but that staff could do better in terms of making the existing site mobile ready.

Call.Click.Connect Data Repository

-Task Force Representative Howells mentioned that staff did not include the potential to provide outreach in the form of a formal letter based on information compiled using the proposed Call.Click.Connect system. Reed responded that the City does provide outreach currently, not necessarily in the form of a current letter, but often a phone call, to follow up with operators who are commonly the source of complaints. Reed also noted that the Task Force discussed providing quarterly outreach in its previous meeting. Reed noted that a formal letter may be helpful in documenting a written record. Task Force Representative Parra noted that the City can use a bus's DOT number to look-up information. Chair Klejst noted that as many citizens may not note this identifier when documenting the complaint, the intent of the original proposal was to reach out to companies after the Call.Click.Connect information was provided. Task Force Representative Susan Howells noted that the Department of Emergency Communications (DEC) number is not the most satisfactory way for citizens to indicate their concerns due to reasons discussed in meeting #3. Reed confirmed that Call.Click.Connect would be another avenue that would not allow for an immediate response, but would provide an avenue for outreach after the fact.

-Task Force Representative Ely noted that a DEC member came to the Waterfront Commission meeting to action, and reiterated the differences between the DEC and Call.Click.Connect would function as a mechanism of tracking hotspots. Acting Transportation Planning Division Chief Steve Sindiong confirmed this.

-The Task Force discussed the use data from Call.Click.Connect and potential uses for the data.

Updating the City Ordinance on Fines and Idling

-Reed noted that at the last Task Force meeting, the Task Force had discussed limiting idling to 10 minutes. Reed noted that after further review and work with the City attorney's office, the City does not have the charter authority to enforce 10 minute idling regulations for tour buses.

-The Task Force agreed that an enforcement officer would have to take note of the start time prior to circling back for the purposes of enforcement.

-Task Force Representative Howells asked if there was interest in changing policy at the State level to allow Alexandria the ability to regulate 10 minutes. Reed responded that he assumed that the City has the opportunity each year to lobby the State for proposed policy decisions. Reed noted that he sensed that generally idling is not enforced through fines, but addressed informally as issues arise.

-Task Force Representative Parra noted that ELD's (electronic logging device) will be used in the future (some already are) can be used to track idling.

-Task Force Representative Kasprzyk asked about fine amounts and suggested that fines should be appropriate to infractions to deter operators. Reed noted that he would look into the fine amounts to see if our current amount per City Code was appropriate.

Satellite Parking / Shuttle Service

-Reed detailed an attachment that explained the costs associated with parking and loading/unloading at a satellite location and noted the additional trips that would be added to Old Town's Street Grid. Acting Transportation Planning Division Chief Steve Sindiong noted

that additionally, this would potentially add a significant degree of loading / transfer and delivery time for passengers.

-The Task Force discussed the option. While the Task Force recognized the benefits for residents, they also noted issues regarding implementation costs and the addition of trips to the Old Town Grid.

-Task Force Representative Parra asked about the potential to contract out a shuttle service.

-Task Force Representative Ely asked about the potential for DASH to provide a satellite service.

-The Task Force discussed seating configurations of shuttles to determine the adequacy.

-The Task Force again asked about the potential to extend DASH to a satellite facility at the Masonic Memorial. Task Force Chair Klejst noted his position on the DASH Board, and that there are existing DASH capacity issues at the King Street Metro location. Chair Klejst also noted that there would be additional capital and operating costs if that option were to be explored. Task Force Representative Kramer noted that further analysis of a DASH extension should be explored. Task Force Representative Cole asked whether or not staff could explore private options. Task Force Representative Howells noted the benefits of the aesthetic experience of riding the trolley. Task Force Chair Klejst asked if staff could analyze this within the procurement study. Sindiong noted that if a planning analysis revealed that the idea had merit, the City could explore cost options through the procurement process. Sindiong asked the Task Force for clarity on the route the Task Force envisioned. Chair Klejst responded that the route would travel down King Street from the Masonic Memorial, and would be different in that regard from the existing trolley route.

-Reed noted that the analysis should be planning-level to be sure that additional routes would be feasible and could operate without cost deficiencies.

-Task Force Representative Hall noted that there are several businesses who have scheduled touring times, and that these times could be shared to reduce operational deficiencies. Task Force Representative Ely asked whether other businesses had predictable scheduling. Task Force Representative Hall noted that most businesses have large groups, and therefore are scheduled in advance.

-Task Force Representative Kasprzyk noted that groups staying in hotels book in advance of their trip, and that information and communication could be shared with hotel managers.

-Chair Klejst asked if there is a way to measure the number of unscheduled buses. Reed responded that this is not feasible.

-The Task Force agreed to direct staff to perform a planning-level analysis of the feasibility of a DASH or private contracting service's ability to cost-effectively facilitate tour bus travel to the Waterfront from a satellite facility. This analysis would occur outside the scope of the Task Force.

-Task Force Representative Cole asked about the potential to use the ambassadors to track the number of buses that were arriving in an unscheduled fashion. Staff responded that it

could attempt to devise a way to get an order of magnitude regarding unscheduled bus operations in the City.

Better Design and Wayfinding

-Task Force Representative Cole asked about the cost of wayfinding to the City. Reed responded that costs would be assessed on a task by task basis. Acting Division Chief Steve Sindiong noted that these projects could also be coordinated with the City's Complete Streets solutions. Reed noted that the City would need to take a context-sensitive approach to avoid over-signage.

-Task Force Representative Hall asked Task Force Representative Parra if he had seen any signage that has been particularly effective. Task Force Parra noted that Savannah and Atlantic City have good signage, but that consistent signage has not been used through the country.

Coordinate with Other Jurisdictions

-Reed noted that the City has reached out to Arlington County, the District of Columbia, and Prince George's County to coordinate sharing links and information. Reed noted that Prince George's County system is a bit diffuse and does not have a formal management office for tour bus operations, but that the City was able to begin coordination with Arlington County and the District.

-Reed noted that the City has shared the other jurisdictions links on its own website and is waiting for the other jurisdictions to reciprocate.

-A Task Force representative asked if the City had considered coordination with National Harbor. Task Force Representative Hall noted that the Harbor does not have a consistent system/method in place.

-Task Force Representative Parra noted that Alexandria is a feeder from DC, and suggested that Alexandria use signage that is consistent with DC's if such signage exists. Task Force Representative Parra noted that DC has a different parking approval process for tour buses.

-Task Force Representative Ely asked about the City's coordination with National Harbor.

-Task Force Representative Hall discussed the coordination between the parties and detailed the use of the water taxi as relevant to a forthcoming marathon. The Task Force also discussed a future bus circulator between National Harbor and Alexandria.

Paid Parking at all Motorcoach Facilities

-Task Force Representative Cole asked staff if some parking locations are more desirable than others. Reed responded that short term parking locations that are not priced in the City will be going offline in the not too distant future. Reed noted that there is currently disincentive for parking at the Masonic Memorial because the other short-term parking spaces in the City are free. Reed distinguished the allowed time per vehicle for the City's existing free locations, which only allow parking up to 4 hours, from the Masonic Memorial, where parking is allowed for 10 hours (\$15) or overnight/24 hours (\$40).

-Task Force Representative Charlotte Hall noted that operators currently see the flat rate as a benefit as it provides a safe haven.

-Acting Division Chief Steve Sindiong noted that the City would consider adding a meter at this location. Sindiong noted that enforcement would be allowed per coordination between the Alexandria Police Department and the Masonic Memorial.

-Reed noted that the spaces on Swann Avenue will eventually be removed. This means that the City will not have a location for individual operators who arrive without prior arrangements. A meter would allow the buses to be absorbed immediately on site.

-Task Force Representative Cole asked if there has been push-back from operators regarding pricing. Reed responded that there has not been; however, this could be due to the fact that there currently are free parking sites available in the City.

-Task Force Representative Kasprzyk suggested making a portion of the spaces at Masonic Memorial reservation based, while some could be converted into on-demand spaces. For example, the spaces could be broken out into a 25/75 ratio where 75 percent remain reservation base space. Reed noted that this is a strong idea which staff will consider.

Public Comment

-Wellington Watts of Colonial Ghost Tours suggested contacting customers to discuss their needs in regard to the feasibility of a satellite lot. Mr. Watts cited concerns about breaking about the logistics of touring groups (for example, school groups). Mr. Watts noted his concerns regarding the distance of a potential tour bus lot from touring points of interest in Old Town. Mr. Watts suggested that staff consider a half acre or acre near the Waterfront to use for a potential motorcoach drop-off location. Mr. Watts clarified that buses could use the area to also turn around and return to the satellite location. Mr. Watts added that this should be in walkable proximity to Old Town to eliminate the need for shuttles and/or jitneys, which would impact customers' experiences. The Task Force asked about potential locations. Mr. Watts noted that as the Waterfront is being redone, this should be investigated.

-The Task Force discussed operations for DASH buses around the Strand. There were differing opinions about whether or not vehicular traffic would be allowed on the Strand. Acting Transportation Planning Division Chief Steve Sindiong noted that to his understanding, the Waterfront Plan did not preclude DASH bus and motorcoach operations on the Strand.

-Department of Project Implementation Acting Deputy Director Tony Gammon provided an overview of the construction impacts around the Waterfront. He noted that no change in existing traffic flow was assumed in the plan that was approved in 2014 by City Council. The materiality of the street and streetscape character will be changing. There is nothing in the plan that will preclude motorcoach operations on the Strand. Task Force Representative Ely asked if motorcoaches would be allowed to drop off passengers along the Strand. Gammon noted that this could be allowed, so long as this was not impacted by a larger policy decision. Gammon noted that the Waterfront Plan's approval in 2014 was unanimous. The group affirmed that there was no resolution on this issue through previous Task Force efforts, and at the time of the Waterfront Plan's approval, there was no interest in making a policy decision about motorcoach operations on the Strand.

-Acting Transportation Planning Division Chief Steve Sindiong asked Acting Deputy Director Tony Gammon to walk the Task Force through the phasing of the Waterfront's implementation, as relevant to the Task Force's questions. Gammon did so, and noted that one of the two pump stations planned was envisioned to include bathrooms. Gammon noted that the Strand would be a pedestrian priority zone to help facilitate pedestrian traffic between Duke and King. Gammon noted that vehicular

traffic could potentially be limited on the Strand for buses and tour buses only. Task Force Representative Ely asked whether the Strand would be able to handle multiple buses loading and unloading. Task Force Representative Howell seconded this concern. Task Force Representative Hall responded that her business still plans to load/unload at this location. Gammon continued on to detail the Waterfront's plan and its implementation timing. Sindiong asked if there would be impacts to the DASH operations during the implementation of interim Fitzgerald Square. Gammon noted that only minor impacts are anticipated for this project. In 2019, Gammon continued, utility work would begin to set up for the Strand project. These improvements would last about a year. Motorcoach and trolley traffic would be impacted at this time. In 2026, construction impacts are anticipated again for the Strand for further implementation of the Waterfront Plan. Construction impacts would again be anticipated for about, or just beyond, one year.

Task Force's Recommendation on Policies (Steve Klejst)

Task Force Chair Steve Klejst requested that the Task Force make a motion on staff's recommendations for motorcoach policies with the following modifications:

- For the update to the City idling ordinance, there was a modification to add fine amounts.
- In regards to staff's position to not recommend a satellite parking proposal, there was a modification to direct staff to initiate a planning-level analysis of a contractor service, or DASH operated service. This should include the issuance of a Request for Information to learn more about costs and benefits associated with a potential service.

-The motion to accept staff's recommendations as modified by was put on the table by Task Force Representative Kramer. The motion was seconded simultaneously by Task Force Representative Hall and Ely. The motion passed unanimously.

Short Term Parking and Loading/Unloading Location Evaluation Results

-Chair Klejst moved to the next item of business noting the process used to develop evaluation scores and reminded the Task Force that weights were based off of input provided at the second meeting.

-For the short-term parking locations, Task Force Representative Ely noted that per discussion at previous meetings, the 1400 block of Jamieson does not appear to be a suitable location for short term parking. Reed noted that the 1400 block of Jamieson Street's score is based on the holistic evaluation inputs, whose weights were determined by the Task Force. Per further discussion Task Force Representative Ely moved to remove the 1400 Block of Jamieson from further consideration. Task Force Representative Cole seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

-Reed walked through each site. For the Regal Cinemas Site at Potomac Yard, Reed noted that the site scored high relative to other options, but as a long term option the site is not feasible. Task Force Representative Ely asked whether or not the site was feasible in the short term. Reed responded that if recommended, staff would ask the property owner to look at options, but this would not necessarily suggest that the property owner would be willing to accommodate the City. Acting Division Chief Sindiong reaffirmed this, and noted that the property owner, based on conversations with them, would expect to be reimbursed

for the use of its property. Reed noted that should the site actually be feasible per the property owner, after redevelopment, the Task Force would need to be reconvened to identify new parking options. Acting Division Chief Sindiong noted that staff felt it had identified a strong site with a willing partner at the Masonic Memorial, and encouraged the Task Force to view each site in a relative context.

-Task Force Representative Vic Parra asked staff whether or not the NRG's neutral evaluation considered the implementation of a satellite service. Acting Division Chief Sindiong noted that the property owners have indicated that the site will ultimately redevelop and did not want a satellite facility as part of the redevelopment, and that if the site were to be considered in the short term, the owners would expect some reimbursement from the City. Reed noted that there are other constraints relevant to the site, including the construction of the Virginia Dominion KV line as well as the implementation of the neighborhood bikeway on Royal Street, the latter of which has been raised by the public. Task Force Representative Kramer asked about whether or not the neighborhood bikeway was a done deal. Sindiong noted that the bikeway was noted in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan update, and that the effort would focus on calming traffic on Royal Street for both pedestrians and bicyclists. The Task Force discussed the proposed roundabouts, which Sindiong noted were not ultimately recommended. Task Force Representative Ely noted that opposition to the bikeway's implementation was building and would grow louder in the fall, particularly in regard to stop signs. Sindiong reiterated that the bikeway was recommended in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan as an alternate north-south route for bicyclists from Union Street, and that the City is not planning to remove stop signs.

-The Task Force discussed the loading and unloading evaluation results. Reed again noted that results are not indicative of preferences for the Task Force, staff, or the public. Task Force Representative Ely asked about whether the 100 S. Union location was adjacent to the future Carr Hotel. Reed responded that it is adjacent to the American Medical Building, and that the property owner of that building is not supportive of the location.

-Reed noted that any recommendation involving the removal of on-street parking would need to go through the Traffic and Parking Board. This process would allow for another avenue of public input.

-Task Force Representative Ely suggested that no Old Town resident would support the removal of on-street parking in Old Town. Acting Division Chief Sindiong replied that one option for consideration by the Task Force could be to create a shared situation where the loading/unloading location would only be used for motorcoaches during their peak hours or season. Task Force Representative Ely noted that the peak demand period and season for vehicles would also be the peak demand period and season for motorcoaches. He continued noting that there are condominium projects whose future residents would be impacted by the idling bus noise and traffic.

Public Comment

-Chair Klejst reopened public comment.

-Wellington Watts of Colonial Ghost Tours suggested that expanding around Market Square is fine. Mr. Watts noted that in regard to his original proposal, the City could consider paving something near Oronoco Bay Park to move traffic away from the center of Old Town. Task Force Representative Ely noted on the north side of the 300 block of Cameron Street have apartments above shops, and questioned whether that would be a suitable bus loading location. Reed responded that there are apartments at this locations, but that buses already use this location as circuit, and thus buses traverse this area. Task Force Representative Ely noted the difference between a bus traveling on the street and a bus stopping to unload on a street.

-**Dick Eisener** from Cameron Mews noted that he appreciated the emphasis placed on quality of life in the evaluation. He also noted that staff has received written public comment on these spaces. Mr. Eisenger continued on, noting that buses had formerly parked on Union Street in front of Cameron Mews, and that soot would collect within the apartments. Mr. Eisenger stressed the importance of considering locations that are not adjacent to residential units. The Task Force discussed the qualitative differences between parking and loading. Task Force Representative Hall noted that she worked very closely with the residents in Cameron Mews to encourage motorcoaches to unload in the correct location. Ms. Hall noted that it would be difficult to allow coaches back on Union after the prior efforts given that the buses present a hardship for the community. Ms. Hall noted that given the cars, joggers, and bikers, this may not be the best place. Various members of the Task Force affirmed this fact. Task Force Representative Susan Howells noted that delivery trucks render this location more difficult. Task Force Representative Howells asked why the presentation did not call out opposition on N. Union Street as it did on S. Union Street. Reed noted that Ms. Howell's concern was a good point and was an oversight as outreach was particularly focused on commercial properties. If staff were to do future iterations of the presentation, Reed suggested that the City would be fine adding a bullet point regarding a lack of support from adjacent residential groups for the Union locations.

-Task Force Representative Lauren Kramer asked if any property owners indicated their support for a location. Reed responded that no property owners contacted the City indicating their support. Reed reiterated that the Task Force will need to consider impacts to the Waterfront, and factors regarding how far passengers are willing to walk to reach their point of interest in along the Waterfront.

-The Task Force discussed whether or not the Union Street locations should be taken off the table.

-Task Force Representatives Kramer and Hall discussed the viability of St. Mary's playground parking lot as a potential site for short term or satellite parking. The Task Force asked staff to add S. Royal Street at the turnaround as a potential bus location. Staff would need to coordinate with the National Park Service on the Jones Point Park plan.

-Task Force Representative Hall asked about the potential to park at Robinson Terminal North given that the former project is on hold. Reed noted that communication was sent out shortly after staff was notified of the property owner's plans. Materials were updated, and

staff coordinated with Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA). Reed noted that a concern about the permits still containing the old maps was brought to his attention, and that he worked with internal staff to update the maps.

-Task Force Representative Hall suggested staff coordinate with property owners of Robinson Terminal North to discuss the potential of using space on their property to park buses.

Next Steps

-Chair Klejst walked the Task Force through next steps. Task Force Member Howell asked about the implementation process. Reed noted that the avenues of implementation depend on the nature of the recommendation. Reed noted that some decisions could be implemented administratively, while others will require a hearing at the Traffic and Parking Board.

-Reed noted that he was compiling written correspondence and would share it with the task Force prior to the next meeting.

ADDENDUMS:

1. The following position was sent by Task Force Representative White-Olson prior to the meeting as she could not be in attendance due to a family emergency.

“NOTICE does not support motorcoach parking at NRG, an instead prefers that motorcoaches utilize the Masonic Memorial for parking, even if this means that operators will have to pay for parking.”

2. The following statement was sent by Task Force Representative Kramer following the meeting. Representative Kramer asked that staff distribute this statement.

Dated September 15. 2016 at 9:30pm

Dear Patrick,

I was hoping to send this to all Task Force members, and would appreciate your forwarding this to them as it is very important.

My last comment regarding loading/unloading zones was not discussed, and it must be. As you know, I am unable to attend the meeting on October 4th. It is my hope that it is rescheduled so I can fulfill my role as representative of the OTCA.

My comment was not flippant and was intended as a starting point to discuss realistic loading/unloading zones. Union Street is NOT a realistic loading/unloading zone. It is crowded and dangerous. Period. Why not add King Street into the mix? Seriously! The restaurants and shops are the beneficiaries of those on busses. If Union Street can be considered, I propose we add King Street into the mix. (I am not in any way trying to make your job more difficult ~ you

and your colleagues have done an outstanding job compiling and presenting data, which we appreciate.)

The discussion regarding potential parking areas (one of which I had originally suggested at our first meeting - the option of the area across from St. Mary's parking lot, that is) became the focus of the discussion rather than loading/unloading zones, which is regrettable. I've no doubt that the community I represent (along with Bert Ely) - the Old Town Civic Association - will fully support my suggestion that I would like to make a motion. I have copied the OTCA President, Yvonne Callahan, as well as Bert Ely on this message.

I respectfully request that my suggestion be included in the minutes and that the Task Force has the opportunity to discuss this via email in the coming week.